



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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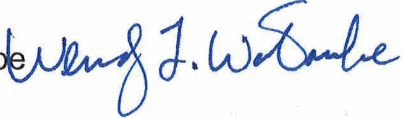
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ASST. AUDITOR-CONTROLLERS

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February 16, 2011

TO: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe   
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **CHILDREN'S BUREAU OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FOSTER FAMILY  
AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW – A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN  
AND FAMILY SERVICES PROVIDER**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Children's Bureau of Southern California Foster Family Agency (Children's Bureau or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) provider. The purpose of our review was to determine whether Children's Bureau was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract.

DCFS contracts with Children's Bureau, a private, non-profit, community-based organization to recruit, train and certify foster parents for supervising children DCFS places in foster care. Once the Agency places a child, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program. The Agency oversees 158 certified foster homes in which 154 DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. Children's Bureau is located in the First and Fifth Districts. DCFS paid Children's Bureau approximately \$3.1 million during Fiscal Year 2009-10.

**Results of Review**

The ten homes we visited were well maintained and in compliance with California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Title 22 regulations. The foster parents indicated that the services they received from Children's Bureau met their expectations, the children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents, and the toddlers

we observed appeared well cared for and healthy. In addition, the Agency ensured that social workers' caseloads did not exceed the maximum established by CDSS Title 22 regulations. Children's Bureau also ensured that staff possessed the required education and work experience, conducted hiring clearances, and provided ongoing training for staff working on the County contract.

Children's Bureau needs to ensure that children's case files and Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) have all the required information. We specifically noted the following:

- Two (10%) of the 20 NSPs reviewed did not have goals that were measurable and specific to the child.

*Children's Bureau's attached response indicates they retrained their staff.*

- Three (15%) of the 20 case files reviewed did not have documentation that the children's DCFS social workers were provided with monthly updates on the children's progress.

*Children's Bureau's attached response indicates these were isolated incidents and that they retrained their staff.*

Details of our review, along with recommendations for corrective action, are attached.

### **Review of Report**

We discussed our report with Children's Bureau on September 14, 2010. In their attached response (Attachment I), Children's Bureau indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review. In their response (Attachment II), DCFS indicates they will monitor the Agency for compliance with our recommendations.

We thank Children's Bureau management for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:MMO:JET:DC:AA

#### **Attachments**

- c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer  
Antonia Jiménez, Acting Director, DCFS  
Christopher Frank, Chair, Board of Directors, Children's Bureau  
Lou Graham, Director of Foster Care and Adoption, Children's Bureau  
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee

**FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM  
CHILDREN'S BUREAU OF SOUTHER CALIFORNIA FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY  
FISCAL YEAR 2009-10**

**BACKGROUND**

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) pays Children's Bureau of Southern California (Children's Bureau or Agency) a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Foster Care Rates Bureau. Based on the child's age, Children's Bureau receives between \$1,589 and \$1,865 per month, per child. Out of these funds, Children's Bureau pays the foster parents between \$624 and \$790 per month, per child. DCFS paid Children's Bureau approximately \$3.1 million during Fiscal Year (FY) 2009-10.

**PURPOSE/METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of our review was to determine whether Children's Bureau was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files and interviewed Children's Bureau staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed the children and foster parents. We conducted our review during January and February 2010.

**BILLED SERVICES**

**Objective**

Determine whether Children's Bureau provided program services in accordance with their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

**Verification**

We visited ten of the 158 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Children's Bureau billed DCFS and interviewed 12 foster parents and 15 children placed in the ten homes. We also observed three toddlers who were too young to interview. In addition, we reviewed the case files for 21 foster parents and 20 children and we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

**Results**

The ten homes we visited were well maintained and in compliance with CDSS Title 22 regulations. Children's Bureau needs to ensure that children's case files and Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) have all the required information. We specifically noted the following:

**Needs and Services Plans and Children's Case Files**

- Two (10%) of the 20 NSPs reviewed did not have goals that were measurable and specific to the child.
- Three (15%) of the 20 case files reviewed did not have documentation that the children's DCFS social workers were provided with monthly updates on the children's progress.

**Recommendations**

**Children's Bureau management ensure:**

1. NSPs contain all the required information including goals that are individualized to the children, specific and measurable.
2. DCFS social workers are updated monthly regarding the children's progress.

**CLIENT VERIFICATION****Objective**

Determine whether the program participants received the services that Children's Bureau billed to DCFS.

**Verification**

We interviewed 15 children placed in ten Children's Bureau certified foster homes and 12 foster parents to confirm the services the Agency billed to DCFS. In addition, we observed three toddlers who were too young to interview.

**Results**

The foster children indicated they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the foster parents indicated that the services they received from Children's Bureau met their expectations. In addition, the three toddlers we observed appeared well cared for and healthy.

**Recommendation**

**None.**



**STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS****Objective**

Verify that Children's Bureau social workers' caseloads do not exceed 15 placements and that the supervising social workers do not supervise more than six social workers as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

**Verification**

We interviewed Children's Bureau's Program Coordinator and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers and supervising social workers.

**Results**

Children's Bureau's 14 social workers carried an average of 13 cases and the Agency's three supervising social workers supervised an average of five social workers.

**Recommendation**

None.

**STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS****Objective**

Determine whether Children's Bureau's staff possess the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether the Agency conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff.

**Verification**

We interviewed Children's Bureau's Program Coordinator and reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

**Results**

Children's Bureau's staff possessed the required education and work experience and the Agency conducted hiring clearances and provided ongoing training for staff working on the County contract.

**Recommendation**

None.

**PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP**

**Objective**

Determine the status of the recommendations reported in the prior Auditor-Controller monitoring review.

**Verification**

We verified whether the outstanding recommendation from the FY 2007-08 monitoring review was implemented. The report was issued on June 30, 2008.

**Results**

The prior monitoring report had one recommendation and the Agency fully implemented the recommendation.

**Recommendation**

None.



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Director of Foster Care and Adoptions  
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Los Angeles, CA 90007  
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September 24, 2010

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Lou Graham, Director of Foster Care and Adoptions  
Children's Bureau of Southern California Foster Family Agency

Subject: Response to Children's Bureau of Southern California Foster Family Agency  
Contract Review – a Department of Children and Family Services Provider

Dear Supervisors:

We would once again like to thank the Auditor-Controller's office for their professional *manner and responsive approach during the comprehensive review* of our Foster Family Agency. Ms. Maricela Morfin and Mr. Brian Henricks were professional, knowledgeable and a pleasure to work with. Children's Bureau of Southern California (CBSC) has served the community of Los Angeles for over a hundred years and we hope to continue our partnership with Los Angeles County for many more years to come. CBSC is committed to providing the best possible services to our children and families.

The following addresses the two recommendations listed in the Foster Family Agency Contract Review Report:

Children's Bureau of Southern California  
Page Two

1. NSPs contain all the required information including goals that are specific and measurable.

This statement applied to two of the 20 NSPs reviewed. The social worker who completed the two NSPs as well as their supervisor have been retrained individually since that time. Please note that DCFS also completed a training with all FFAs in January 2010 due to the confusion involved in completing the quarterly/NSP template. During this training they provided more specific information about what they were looking for during their reviews, particularly in the area of developing specific and measurable goals for the NSPs. At the time of your review we had just begun training staff and implementing the items learned at the DCFS training, which would not be reflected until future quarterlies were completed. CB has provided additional training to all of our program staff regarding development of goals that are specific and measurable on 3/16/10 and 4/20/10 and is ongoing in individual supervision. Our supervisors were also provided additional specific training in this area on 2/8/10, 3/8/10 and 4/12/10.

2. DCFS social workers are provided with monthly updates on the children's progress.

This statement applied to 3 of 20 case files reviewed (2 of the 3 were for siblings in same home), where it was noted that *the files did not contain documentation* that the children's DCFS social worker was provided with monthly updates on the child's progress. Our staff are well aware of the contract requirement in this area and it appears these were isolated incidents, particularly because there were many months of CSW contacts reflected in other quarterlies in the same files. The staff and supervisor involved in these cases were retrained on the contract requirement. In addition, we completed a reminder training on 9/24/10 with all of our staff.

We appreciate the Auditor-Controller's recognition of our program and look forward to continuing our positive working partnership with Los Angeles County.

Sincerely,



Lou Graham  
Director of Foster Care and Adoptions

Cc: Alex Morales, CEO and President of Children's Bureau  
Brian Henricks, Auditor-Controller/Contract Monitoring Division





Antonia Jiménez, Deputy CEO  
Interim Director

**County of Los Angeles  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 351-5802

December 15, 2010

TO: Aggie Alonso, Chief Accountant-Auditor  
Countywide Contract Monitoring Division

FROM:  Elizabeth A. Howard, Section Head  
Out of Home Care Management Division  
Foster Family Agency/Group Home Performance Management

Board of Supervisors  
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
MAYOR  
Fifth District  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District  
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
Second District  
ZEY YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District  
DON KNABE  
Fourth District

**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF  
CHILDREN'S BUREAU FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

The Auditor Controller's (A-C) Contract Review of Children's Bureau Foster Family Agency was conducted during January and February, 2010. The Out of Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) received the Auditor-Controller's November 17, 2010 final draft report of the contract compliance review on November 17, 2010. The DCFS monitor reviewed the report on November 18, 2010.

The A-C's draft report indicates that two NSPs did not have goals that were measurable and child specific, and three case files did not have documentation that the DCFS CSWs were provided with monthly updates on the children's progress.

The A-C approved Children's Bureau FFA's Corrective Action Plan (CAP) dated September 24, 2010. The FFA's CAP indicates the additional and ongoing training the FFA has provided to their staff to increase the level of compliance with the proper documentation.

The OHCMD will continue to monitor the FFA's full compliance with the State regulations including the A-C's recommendations within six months after the issuance of the A-C's final report.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (626) 569-6804.

KR:EAH:ek

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*

**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF  
CHILDREN'S BUREAU FOSTER FAMILY AND ADOPTION AGENCY  
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c: Brian Mahan, CEO, Children & Families Well-Being Cluster  
Wendy L. Watanabe, Auditor-Controller  
Patricia Ploehn, Director, DCFS  
Lisa Parrish, Deputy Director, DCFS